

Room to Grow Child Minding

Mauchline

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
10 June 2024

Service provided by:
Jamie Allen

Service provider number:
SP2022000197

Service no:
CS2022000292

About the service

Room to Grow is registered to provide a childminding service for up to six children at any one time up to 16 years of age:

- of whom no more than six are under 12 years;
- of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school and;
- of whom no more than one is under 12 months.

Numbers include the children of the childminder's family/household.

The service is provided from a terraced home in a residential area of Mauchline. The service is close to public transport links, local amenities and parks. Children are cared for in the living room. Children also have access to an enclosed back garden and upstairs bathroom.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 6 June 2024 between 15:00 and 17:30. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered. In making our evaluations of the service we:

- Spoke with two children using the service.
- Received electronic questionnaires from five families.
- Spoke with the childminder.
- Observed practice and daily life.
- Reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children experienced kind and compassionate care.
- Children were happy and engaged throughout our visit, leading their own play and learning.
- The childminder had a keen interest in nature, gardening and wildlife, and planned to develop their garden and outdoor experiences.
- The childminder had a positive outlook on change and improvement and engaged well with the inspection process.
- The childminder understood the importance of developing positive relationships and being responsive to children's needs.

From this inspection we evaluated this service as:

In evaluating quality, we use a six point scale where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How good is our care, play and learning?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children experienced kind and compassionate care. We observed warm, caring interactions between the children and childminder. One child told us, "Jamie is fun, caring and kind-hearted. She cares about me and I feel safe with her." As a result, children were happy and settled in the childminder's home. The childminder knew children and their families well. One parent told us, "Jamie has fostered an environment that is loving and caring. She makes each of my kids feel included and listened to." This meant children and families benefited from trusting, respectful relationships.

Children experienced a relaxed, unhurried snack time where they were supported to choose what they would like to eat and drink. The childminder engaged in pleasant conversations which created a positive, sociable mealtime experience. We suggested providing more opportunities for children to be involved in making and serving their own snacks, this would help them develop their independence.

All children had a personal plan in place that included information about their likes and preferences. These had been signed and dated by families within the required timescales to ensure information was current. Whilst the childminder knew the children well, we discussed developing children's personal plans to ensure that they clearly reflected children's individual care needs, and how the childminder will support them. The childminder should also identify some next steps with children and their families. These should include details on how children will be supported to achieve their next steps and monitor their progress. This would help children to reach their full potential.

1.3 Play and learning

Children were supported to make choices and lead their own play. We observed children independently accessing resources suited to their interests. One parent told us, "My child has been involved in many activities such as gardening, going for walks, arts and crafts, reading books and going to play groups." During our visit, children were engaged in drawing pictures and baking cookies. The childminder used this experience to encourage children to think about the science of baking. As a result, children were happy and having fun, whilst developing their skills and knowledge.

Children had some opportunities to develop their numeracy and literacy skills. Children could choose to use books, jigsaws, board games and dominoes. During our visit we observed children having fun drawing and writing. We advised the childminder to consider ways to extend children's play and learning experiences through using effective questioning, these are open ended questions that encourage children to develop their problem-solving skills. We also suggested providing more play experiences using loose parts and open-ended resources, these are materials that have no specific purpose. This would support children to develop their creativity and curiosity.

The childminder updated parents with information and photographs regularly through messages and face-to-face discussions. One parent told us, "We discuss the activities that my kids are enjoying and the areas that would be helpful to develop." As a result, parents felt valued and included in their children's play and learning experiences.

Children benefited from regular opportunities to play and learn in the community. The children told us they go on walks, visit local parks and attend the local community hall to take part in sports such as football and badminton. This supported children to develop meaningful connections with their local community.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Children were cared for in an environment that was warm, bright and homely. Children confidently moved around the childminders home and had access to a living room, fully enclosed back garden and upstairs bathroom. These areas were clean and well-maintained. It was clear to us that children felt at ease in the childminders home. As a result children were happy and settled.

Children could easily access resources suited to their interests. This supported them to engage in self-directed play. The childminder had two pet rabbits that lived in large cages on the living room floor. Whilst the rabbit cages were clean well maintained, they restricted some of the floor space. During our inspection we observed older children happily playing with the rabbits and using the dining table to draw. We asked the childminder to consider the impact of the restricted floor space on the quality of play experiences for younger children. We also advised the childminder to update their pet policy, risk assessment and gain written parental permission for children to handle their rabbits. This would ensure that children are supported to enjoy the benefits of interacting with animals safely.

Children's health and wellbeing benefited from regular access to outdoors. Children could choose to access the back garden daily and told us that they enjoyed playing on the swing and going on walks to the park. The garden contained a small pond, this section was fenced off with a locked gate to ensure children did not access this area unsupervised. This kept children safe. At the time of our visit, the back garden was in the process of being developed and areas of the garden were slightly overgrown. The childminder had a keen interest in nature, gardening and wildlife. They discussed their plans to improve their garden and develop more opportunities for planting, growing and sensory experiences outdoors. We agreed that this would be beneficial to provide children with more outdoor space and rich opportunities to play and learn in a natural environment.

The childminder had a good understanding of their responsibility to keep children safe. Children were encouraged to wash their hands at key times and the childminder used appropriate personal protective equipment for personal care. This minimised any potential spread of infection and protected children from harm. The childminder was registered with the Information Commissioner's Office and stored files securely. This ensured that children and families privacy was protected.

How good is our leadership?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The childminder had a positive outlook on change and improvement and engaged well with the inspection process. During our visit, it was clear that the childminder valued children and families. As a result, the service had a positive, supportive ethos.

When reviewing children's attendance patterns, we noted that the childminder exceeded their maximum numbers for a short period of time every fortnight. The childminder made prompt changes to rectify this prior to the conclusion of the inspection. This was necessary to ensure they always operated within the conditions of their registration.

The childminder had recently made changes to their household and had not submitted the correct notification to the Care Inspectorate. As a result, an adult living in the childminder's home had not undergone suitability checks in line with legislation. The childminder must submit the correct notification to update the details of their household (see requirement 1).

The childminder regularly engaged with children to discuss their daily activities and informally chatted with families. One parent told us, "My childminder has made it clear if I have any ideas or thoughts they always welcome it." We suggested developing methods of gathering feedback from children and families in relation to specific aspects of service development. This would encourage children and families to be meaningfully included in self-evaluation and ensure their voices are at the centre of improvement planning. We also discussed the benefits of using evaluative guidance documents such as, 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare,' available on the Care Inspectorate website. This would help the childminder to identify and implement improvements that would promote positive outcomes for children and families.

The childminder told us they often found it difficult to seek feedback from parents as children were not always dropped off or collected by an adult. We advised the childminder to establish a comprehensive drop off and collection policy, including a thorough risk assessment. The childminder should also obtain clear written parental permissions. This would mitigate potential risks and ensure children's safety (see area for improvement 1).

Requirements

1. By 31 July 2024, the provider must ensure that all adults living at the property who are required to, have completed suitability checks to determine their fitness to be in proximity to children.

This is to comply with Regulation 12(1) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure children's safety and wellbeing during arrival and departure from the service, the provider should establish a comprehensive drop off and collection policy. This should include robust risk assessments and written parental permissions.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19) and ' I am helped to feel safe and secure in my local community' (HSCS 3.25).

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values

Children experienced kind and compassionate care, this ensured they felt valued and loved. The childminder understood the importance of developing positive relationships and being responsive to children's needs. One parent told us, "Jamie is an amazing childminder, I trust her with my child. She always has a lot of time for the kids." Another parent stated, "She is reliable and highly trustworthy, I know that my kids are safe with her and they love going." As a result children had developed strong attachments and felt secure.

The childminder was confident in their role to support children and families and demonstrated a commitment to professional development. They had recently completed training courses in child protection, paediatric first aid and general data protection regulation. During our discussions, the childminder evidenced a good knowledge of these key areas. This helped to keep children safe and protected from harm.

The childminder used the Scottish Childminding Association and Care Inspectorate provider emails to keep up to date with changes in best practice. They had given some consideration to the future development of their knowledge and skills, expressing a keen interest in children's mental health and counselling. This demonstrated their strong commitment to supporting children's wellbeing.

We discussed the benefits of reflecting on training opportunities and professional reading to consider the impact on their practice and service development. This would help the childminder to identify further training and development areas that would impact positively on outcomes for children and families. Throughout our inspection it was clear that the childminder was motivated to continuously develop their knowledge and skills to provide a quality service for children and families.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	4 - Good

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